CCSD's

DISABILITY INFORMATION SHEET

No. 7
2002

Focus on Technology among Persons with Disabilities

In this seventh edition of CCSD's ***Disability Information Sheets***, we continue our focus on experience with technology among persons with disabilities by examining their rates of usage of various forms of technology. The primary source of data for this Information Sheet is Statistics Canada's General Social Survey (GSS), Cycle 14, 2000.

How wired are you?

Internet Use

In today's society, the Internet plays a key role in providing people with valuable information. From news and weather to information about health issues, people without access to Internet technology may be missing a key information component. And, according to the data, persons with disabilities are less likely than their non-disabled counterparts – in every age group – to access the Internet.

Among persons aged 15 to 34, 75.9% of those without disabilities had used the Internet in the previous 12 months, compared with 69% of those with disabilities. For people aged 35 to 54, the figures were 58.6% and 44.6%, respectively, and among those aged 55 to 64, the rates were 35.6% for those without disabilities and 23.6% for those with disabilities. Even among seniors, persons without disabilities were almost twice as likely as those with disabilities to have used the Internet in the previous year (11.3% and 6.6%, respectively). (Note: These data and other tables can be found on CCSD's website at www.ccsd.ca.)

While individuals can access the Internet from a number of venues, having an Internet connection at home certainly improves a person's chances of using this technology. The lower rate of Internet use among persons with disabilities is likely due to the large differences in household Internet access between persons with and those without disabilities. In 2000, only 28.6% of persons with disabilities lived in a household with an Internet connection; among persons without disabilities, this figure was considerably higher at 46.1%.

Household Internet connections varied by age, and there were particularly large gaps among persons of prime working age, as summarized below:

- Among persons aged 15 to 34, 45.9% of persons with disabilities had a home Internet connection, compared with 50.2% of their non-disabled counterparts.
- For those aged 35 to 54, 39.6% of persons with disabilities and 51.6% of their non-disabled counterparts had a home Internet connection.
- For persons aged 55 to 64, 28% of persons with disabilities and 35.9% of those without disabilities had a home Internet connection.
- Among seniors aged 65 and older, the figures dropped to 10.1% and 14.6%, respectively.

Additional study would be required to understand more about the impact that these gaps have on labour market opportunities.[1]

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What other types of information technology are being used?

Today we are exposed to a variety of technologies for communication, entertainment or access to information. Some forms of technology are accessed almost equally by persons with and those without disabilities; in other cases, there are gaps.

Cable Television

Of the different forms of "technology" considered here, cable television had the smallest gap in access between persons with and those without disabilities. Among men with disabilities, 70.2% had watched cable television in the previous year, and among women with disabilities, the figure was 73.8%. Among men and women without disabilities, the figures were 74.5% and 74.6%, respectively. There were few variations in cable television use by age. (See the CCSD's website for data tables.)

Cell Phones

A small majority of persons without disabilities were cell phone users in 2000

[1] The GSS 14 asked only computer-users about their use of e-mail technology, and again, persons with disabilities were less likely than those without disabilities to have used e-mail. Among computer-users in 2000, 55.3% of persons with disabilities had also used e-mail in the past year, but among persons without disabilities, the figure was 66.6%. Use of e-mail technology is also closely linked with age. The highest rate of e-mail use was among younger persons aged 15 to 34. Among this age group, 63.5% of computer-users with disabilities had used e-mail over the last year, whereas the rate was 69.5% among younger persons without disabilities. For computer-users aged 35 to 54, 56.9% of those with disabilities and 66.4% of those without disabilities had used e-mail over the last year. Among those aged 55 to 64 who used computers, 46.9% of those with disabilities and 58.1% of their non-disabled counterparts had also used e-mail. And among senior computer-users, 37.5% of those with disabilities and 43.6% of those without disabilities had used e-mail technology.

(56.2%), whereas among persons with disabilities, cell phone use was much lower (at 36.6%). As well, frequent cell phone use was higher among persons without disabilities. For example, 38.2% of those without disabilities reported using a cell phone on a weekly basis, compared with 21.2% of persons with disabilities. (See data tables on the CCSD website.)

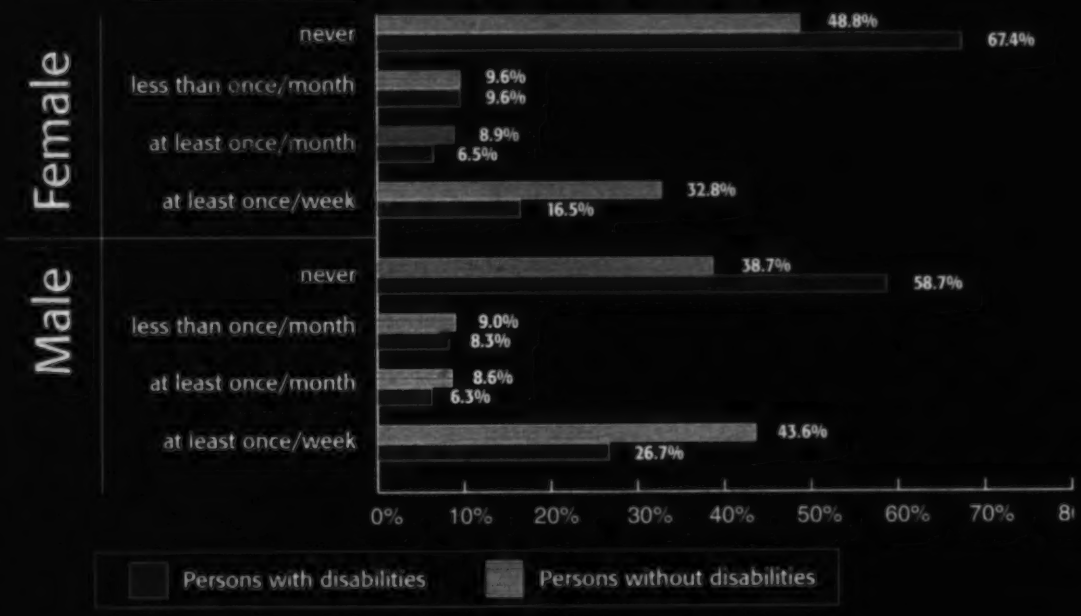
As with other forms of technology, age is an important factor in cell phone use. Younger individuals were more likely to use cell phones and to use them more frequently than did older individuals, and men were slightly more likely than women to use cell phones (see Chart 1 and Table 1).

ATM Bank Machines

Persons with disabilities are not accessing ATM machines at the same rate as those without disabilities, and once again, age is an important factor. Among the youngest group of adults, those with and those without disabilities were more similar in terms of their use of ATM machines (see Table 1). In 2000, only 12.2% of young people (aged 15 to 34) with disabilities and 10.7% of those without disabilities had never used an ATM machine.

However, there were larger gaps in the percentage who used ATM machines *frequently* (i.e., at least once a week). Within every age group, persons without disabilities were more frequent users of ATM machines. The largest gap was among seniors, where 63.6% of seniors with disabilities and 55.2% of seniors without disabilities had never used an ATM machine. And seniors without disabilities were also more likely than those with disabilities to be frequent users of ATM machines (at 22% and 15%, respectively).

Chart 1 **Cell Phone Use in the Past 12 Months, by Gender Persons with and without Disabilities, Canada, 2000**



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using Statistics Canada's General Social Survey, Cycle 14, 2000.

While there were few gender differences among those without disabilities in terms of their ATM use, men with disabilities were more likely to use ATM machines, and to use them more frequently, than did women with disabilities. As summarized in Table 2, 48.4% of men with disabilities reported using ATM machines at least once a week, compared with 39.9% of women with disabilities.

Table 1

Use of Cell Phones and ATM Bank Machines in the Past 12 Months, by Age Group, Persons with and without Disabilities, Canada, 2000

Age Group		Persons with disabilities		Persons without disabilities	
		Cell Phone	ATM	Cell Phone	ATM
15-34 yrs	at least once/week	38.7%	66.6%	42.6%	72.7%
	at least once/month	11.2%	16.2%	12.3%	12.8%
	less than once/month	13.4%	5.0%	12.4%	3.7%
	never	36.7%	12.2%	32.7%	10.7%
35-54 yrs	at least once/week	31.8%	63.7%	42.7%	71.9%
	at least once/month	7.9%	15.0%	7.1%	12.0%
	less than once/month	9.9%	4.4%	7.6%	3.8%
	never	50.5%	17.0%	42.6%	12.3%
55-64 yrs	at least once/week	16.0%	42.7%	29.0%	49.8%
	at least once/month	6.7%	16.4%	6.5%	14.5%
	less than once/month	9.9%	6.6%	7.4%	5.8%
	never	67.5%	34.3%	57.2%	29.9%
65 + yrs	at least once/week	5.0%	15.0%	9.6%	22.0%
	at least once/month	2.5%	15.1%	3.8%	15.6%
	less than once/month	5.6%	6.3%	5.5%	7.2%
	never	86.9%	63.6%	81.1%	55.2%

Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using Statistics Canada's General Social Survey, Cycle 14, 2000.

Table 2

Use of ATM Bank Machines in the Past 12 Months, by Gender, Persons with and without Disabilities, Canada, 2000

Age Group		Persons with disabilities	Persons without disabilities
Male	at least once/week	48.4%	66.5%
	at least once/month	12.8%	12.4%
	less than once/month	5.4%	3.9%
	never	33.4%	17.2%
Female	at least once/week	39.9%	64.3%
	at least once/month	17.8%	13.4%
	less than once/month	5.6%	4.7%
	never	36.7%	17.7%

Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using Statistics Canada's General Social Survey, Cycle 14, 2000.

Next issue: ***Disability Information Sheet No. 8*** will focus on the impact of technology in the workplace and how this affects persons with disabilities. Data from Statistics Canada's General Social Survey (Cycle 14), 2000, will be used.

Supplemental Tables and Charts for CCSD's Disability Information Sheet #7:

Internet, Cable TV and Cell Phones, 1999

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Supplemental Table 1: Internet Use in the Past 12 Months, by Age Group, Persons with and without Disabilities, Canada, 2000

Age Group	Persons with disabilities	Persons without disabilities
15-34 years	69.0%	75.9%
35-54 years	44.6%	58.6%
55-64 years	23.6%	35.6%
65+ years	6.6%	11.3%

Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using Statistics Canada's General Social Survey (Cycle 14), 2000.

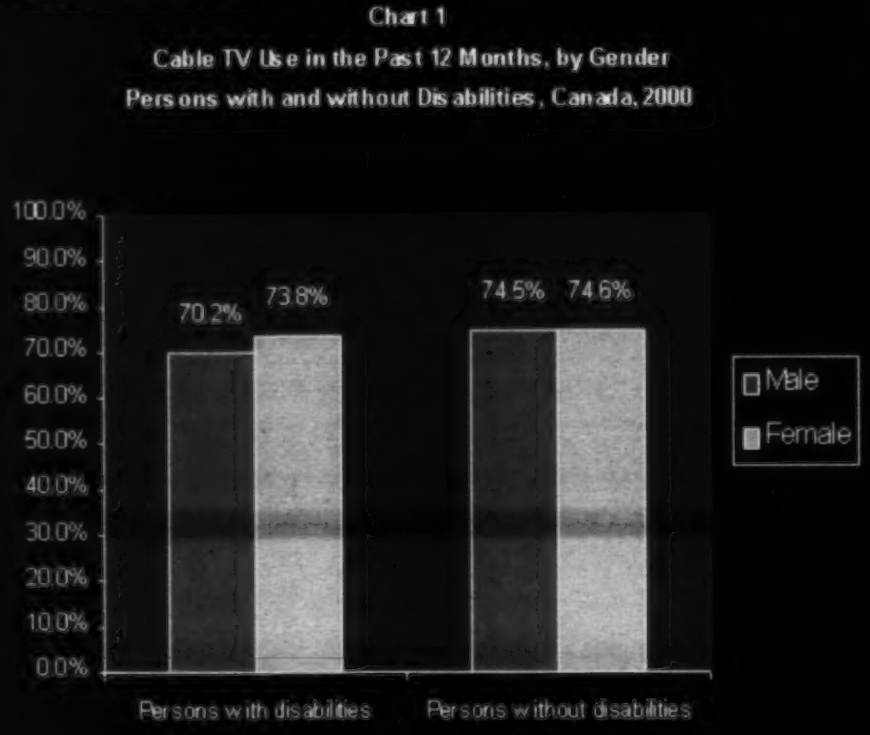
Supplemental Table 2: Home Internet Connections, by Age Group, Persons with and without Disabilities, Canada, 2000

Age Group	Persons with disabilities	Persons without disabilities
15-34 years	45.9%	50.2%
35-54 years	39.6%	51.6%
55-64 years	28.0%	35.9%
65+ years	10.1%	14.6%

Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using Statistics Canada's General Social Survey (Cycle 14), 2000.

Supplemental Table 3: Cable TV Use in the Past 12 Months, by Age Group, Persons with and without Disabilities, Canada, 2000		
Age Group	**Persons with disabilities**	**Persons without disabilities**
15-34 years	76.5%	76.2%
35-54 years	71.5%	73.7%
55-64 years	72.1%	73.4%
65+ years	70.5%	72.9%
Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using Statistics Canada's General Social Survey (Cycle 14), 2000.		

Supplemental Chart # 1

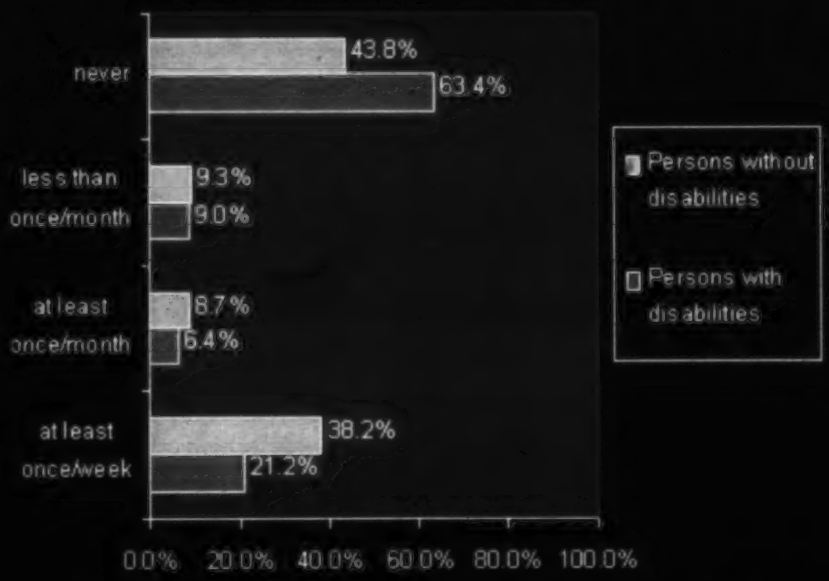


Supplemental Chart # 2

Chart 2

Cell Phone Use in Past 12 Months,

Persons with and without Disabilities, Canada, 2000



Source Statistics Canada's General Social Survey Cycle 14, 2000

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